

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 15-16, add new claim 42, and cancel claims 1-14 and 17-41, as shown in the following listing of claims, which will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Claims 1-14 and 17-41 have been canceled without prejudice.

Applicants do not intend to relinquish subject matter by reason of these amendments or by reason of claim and/or species elections. Applicants reserve the right to pursue subject matter covered by the original language of claims 15-16 and canceled claims 1-14 and 17-41 in an appropriate divisional or continuation application.

Listing of claims:

1. – 14. (canceled)

15 (currently amended). A method of screening a prophylactic/therapeutic agent for respiratory diseases, which comprises using a protein comprising ~~the same or substantially the same amino acid sequence as (a)~~ the amino acid sequence ~~represented by~~ of SEQ ID NO: 2, ~~SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 14, SEQ ID NO: 16, SEQ ID NO: 18, SEQ ID NO: 20, SEQ ID NO: 22, SEQ ID NO: 24, SEQ ID NO: 26, SEQ ID NO: 28, SEQ ID NO: 30, SEQ ID NO: 32, SEQ ID NO: 34, SEQ ID NO: 36, SEQ ID NO: 38, SEQ ID NO: 40, SEQ ID NO: 42, SEQ ID NO: 44, SEQ ID NO: 46, SEQ ID NO: 48, SEQ ID NO: 50, SEQ ID NO: 52, SEQ ID NO: 54, SEQ ID NO: 56, SEQ ID NO: 58, SEQ ID NO: 60 or SEQ ID NO: 62, its partial peptide,~~ or (b) an amino acid sequence having at least 90% homology to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, or a salt thereof, wherein said using of the protein comprises:

(i) measuring the activity of the protein when a cell having an ability to produce the protein is cultured in the presence and absence of a test compound;

(ii) comparing the measured activity of the protein in the presence of the test compound with the measured activity of the protein in the absence of the test compound;
and

(iii) selecting the compound which decreases the activity of the protein by at least about 20% as the prophylactic/therapeutic agent for respiratory diseases, wherein said activity is the cholesterol hydroxylation activity.

16 (currently amended). The screening method according to claim 15, ~~which comprises using a~~ wherein said protein comprising comprises the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 2, ~~its partial peptide,~~ or a salt thereof.

17. – 41. (canceled)

42 (new). The method according to claim 15, wherein said respiratory disease is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.